Lithuanian University Students' Opinions on and Experiences of Using AI Tools for Learning English as a Foreign Language

Aurelija Daukšaitė-Kolpakovienė[a*]

[a] Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania; https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5710-6629

Article Info	Abstract
	This study aimed to investigate Lithuanian university students' perceptions and experiences of the use of AI-based technologies while studying English as a foreign language (EFL). It examined the advantages and disadvantages the students could identify and reflect on (whether AI has empowered their learning in any way or not). An online questionnaire with open-ended and closed-ended questions was administered to twenty-eight Lithuanian EFL students at a liberal arts university in Lithuania to gather data. It was processed using quantitative and qualitative methods. The findings reveal that the study participants used AI tools for a limited number of purposes and functionalities and were rather sceptical about them with regards to improvement of various English skills and competences when using them. Just over a half of all the study participants felt motivated to use AI tools for learning English to achieve the following practical aims: to save time, get ideas, and improve vocabulary. However, the disadvantages were related to the point of view that AI might not be something to learn or receive information from because of numerous flaws.

1. Introduction

Sumakul et al. define artificial intelligence (AI) as "intelligent machines" using "human intelligence" (2022a, 52). At present, numerous technologies and tools use AI for a variety of purposes and have changed or, in some cases, even revolutionised numerous areas of our lives as soon as AI found its application. It is evident that education is not an exception, since AI has offered advancements for both teaching and learning, promising to enhance the learning experience and smoothen the education process (Vera, 2023).

AI is seen as having a great potential in foreign language education as well (Sumakul et al., 2022a). According to Jiang (2022), AI-based tools are helpful to teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) in reducing their workload, providing assessment, and real-time immediate feedback. Consequently, its use should be of great interest to both teachers and students (Son et al., 2023). It has also become quite trendy

---
[*] Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aurelija Daukšaitė-Kolpakovienė, Institute of Foreign Languages at Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania.
e-mail adress: aurelija.dauksaite-kolpakoviene@vdu.lt

to use such tools in EFL classes (Phan, 2023). Jiang claims that there are "six dominant forms of AI application, including Automatic Evaluation Systems, Neural Machine Translation Tools, Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITSs), AI Chatting Robots [commonly known as chatbots], Intelligent Virtual Environment, and Affective Computing (AC) in ITSs" in the EFL context (2022, 1). The list of forms is not exhaustive and the number of tools and technologies under each form is also constantly growing. Vera (2023, p. 70) provides such examples of AI technologies that have already found their place in foreign, e.g., English, language learning, as *Duolingo*, *Lingvist* and *Rosetta Stone* (platforms for language learning), *Grammarly* (a writing assistant), and *ELSA Speak* (a pronunciation application). As Han (2024) notes, AI applications, in fact, are not new in applied linguistics, second or foreign language teaching practice.

Even though AI-based tools have been around for quite some years, in the last couple of years they have become particularly popular. *ChatGPT* and its versions and their possible use have received unprecedented attention worldwide since 2022. Just like other educators, EFL teachers started considering the benefits and drawbacks of such tools, not necessarily because they wanted to but because their students attempted to use such tools in the educational context. Currently, there are very few studies on students' and teachers' perceptions of the use of AI tools in the EFL classroom, which can be seen as a gap in literature, and the ones that do exist seem to prefer to focus on teachers' views as a more popular area of interest. Moreover, the existing studies are often experimental trying to explore selected AI-based tools and their effects on students with regard to one or a few skills or competences.

In contrast, the study of this paper focuses on Lithuanian EFL students and takes a close interest in exploring their opinions on and experiences of the use of AI tools for learning English. It specifically intends to answer the following question: what advantages and disadvantages can they identify and reflect on in relation to the use of AI tools for learning English (whether AI has empowered their learning in any way or not)? It is important to point out that the research involved the students of a university in Lithuania that at the time of the study did not have any officially approved document or guidelines on the use of AI and its tools in the study process. Thus, the students' opinions had not been influenced by their institution yet.

According to Sumakul et al., (2022a), students (as well as teachers) will use technologies, including AI tools and applications if they believe in their usefulness. Therefore, their perceptions matter, since positive perceptions may lead to their actual use, while the negative ones would prevent it. As Han states, "The recent release of *ChatGPT* (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) by OpenAI took the world by storm with its jaw-dropping capabilities, from natural language understanding to conversation generation, language translation, text summarization, grammar correction, paraphrasing, and more" (2024, 1). Yet, Abbas et al. point out that "we have a very limited understanding of the key drivers behind the use of *ChatGPT* [and other AI-based tools] by university students and how *ChatGPT* [and other AI-based tools'] usage affects their personal and academic outcomes" (2024, 2). *ChatGPT*, as probably many other AI tools, will remain in use for a long time (Han, 2024), so the study of this paper intends to shed some light in relation to students' opinions and experiences regarding the use of AI in the EFL context in higher education and in doing so contribute to the body of knowledge outlined in the prior literature in the field, which will be briefly discussed in the next section.

Benefits and Drawbacks of AI Tools in the EFL Context

As noted above, prior studies quite often focused on speaking, writing, vocabulary or grammar with the use of specific AI tools in EFL classes. As far as the improvement of speaking skills is concerned, some interesting research have been conducted. For example, in the one by Zou et al. (2023), undergraduate Chinese students were asked to practice their English speaking skills during a month-long holiday through such AI speech evaluation programs as *Liulishuo*, *IELTS Liulishuo*, *EAP Talk*, *Shanbay*, and other popular ones in their country without using any other resources. It was concluded that AI speech evaluation

programs and apps improved the learners' speaking (including pronunciation, fluency, grammatical accuracy, logical progression of ideas, and ability to speak without preparation in advance) and reading skills. AI tools that evaluated spoken language were seen as useful in providing feedback and tracking the progress of improvement of skills (Zou et al., 2023).

In a different research, Mahmoud (2022) showed a positive effect of the integration of conversational chatbots on Egyptian EFL students' speaking skills, since the chatbots helped to increase learners' English language competence. As a result, "educational chatbots [were seen as] a source of support for the implementation of learning activities," "a platform for information retrieval," and "an authentic classmate" (Mahmoud, 2022, 13). They were also identified as user-friendly, and the students who used the mentioned chatbots received higher grades than those who did not use them. In other words, the students were able to improve their grades in addition to their English speaking skills.

Similarly, *Lyra* virtual assistant helped to enhance secondary school EFL students' (7th graders') speaking skills in comparison to the control group that did not use it (Junaidi et al., 2020). According to Wang and Petrina (2013), AI-driven chatbots can successfully be used to improve not only speaking skills but also reading and writing. Thus, quite often, several skills can be developed and improved at the same time.

In relation to writing skills and grammar, Sumakul et al. (2022b) suggest that early AI applications in foreign language teaching and learning were usually related only to grammatical competence, but the use has expanded dramatically since then. In their study, Yang et al. (2023) analysed how five Chinese university level EFL students perceived the feedback provided by *Pigai*, the largest AI-based AWE (automated writing evaluation) tool in China. It showed positive students' response in improving their written pieces.

Sotomayor Cantos et al. (2023) did a content analysis of scientific articles found through Google Scholar on the use of AI in the EFL context. They noticed that one of the discussed skills practiced and improved through AI tools was writing with the use of *Grammarly*, a popular tool (some functions are not free) for EFL teaching and learning. The review suggests that there are benefits of the use of AI-based tools in making learning engaging, personalized and likable to students of all proficiency levels who can benefit from real-time feedback. In fact, "targeted support" (Vera 2023, p. 67) is seen as a great advantage of AI driven tools in language, especially English (as the tools in other language are usually not as advanced yet), learning. However, as Abbas et al. (2024) point out, more studies to examine benefits and harms of generative AI in all study contexts are definitely still needed.

As far as the benefits are concerned, some recent studies have indicated plenty. In their quasi-experimental study, Han and Sari (2022) involved 75 Turkish university EFL students and compared the impact on students' writing when students received only teacher feedback and combined-automated teacher feedback while using *Criterion*, an AWE tool, as a supplementary feedback tool. Both types of feedback turned out to be effective, but the latter type (using AWE) helped to reduce errors in grammar and mechanics better. Automated feedback, especially its immediacy, was perceived positively, and it was seen as enjoyable and useful.

Interviews (via *WhatsApp*) with Indonesian EFL students who used *Plot Generator* in their EFL writing class showed that the students had a positive attitude towards AI based apps, enjoyed learning when using them and believed this helped to improve their writing skills (Sumakul et al., 2022a). The results revealed students' perceived ease of use and no technical problems, while the usefulness was related to the process

of writing (it gave them ideas to write about) and language use (mostly helped with grammar and vocabulary). Nevertheless, quite few students participated, which can be seen as a drawback.

Phan's (2023) research involved more than 100 students in Vietnam. The students had a positive attitude towards AI-based writing tools that (just like in the previously discussed study by Sumakul et al., (2022a)) improved grammar and vocabulary in their writing. Conversational chatbots were useful because they provided vocabulary necessary for dialogues. On the other hand, accuracy and repetitive answers were identified as drawbacks of such chatbots in a different study (Mahmoud, 2022).

Based on a review done in their article, Dewi et al. (2021) draw a conclusion that AI based applications and other technologies are convenient for EFL students as they help to understand difficult vocabulary, enhance their writing and listening skills. While writing with the use of AI tools, soft skills, such as creativity and imagination, can be stimulated, but later working with their texts in groups without AI tools, students' critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills can be promoted as well (Sumakul et al., 2022a, 55). As Phan (2023) notes, one cannot trust AI blindly, as it may only be used for support and must be evaluated critically.

Marzuki et al. (2023) analysed EFL teachers' opinions on the effect of AI writing tools on students' vocabulary expansion and its use. They identified such advantages as minimized repetition of the same vocabulary, cohesion and coherence in students' writing, but the drawbacks included overdependence on these tools, which may negatively affect students' problem-solving skills. In the classes of these EFL teachers, the students used a combination of such AI tools as *Quillbot*, *WordTune*, *Jenni*, *ChatGPT*, *Paperpal*, *Copy.ai*, and *Essay Writer* and improved their writing in terms of content and organisation.

Studies have shown that the use of AI tools and technologies in the EFL setting motivates students or increase their level or motivation (Mahmoud, 2022; Phan, 2023; Vera, 2023). In addition, AI technologies positively affect EFL students' engagement and study outcomes (Alhalangy & AbdAlgane, 2023; Ayala-Pazmiño & Alvarado-Lucas, 2023; Vera (2023), help to provide personalised feedback (Ayala-Pazmiño & Alvarado-Lucas, 2023; Gadhvi and Parmar 2023; Vera, 2023), which is especially important while working with students with disabilities (Kamalov et al, 2023), give opportunities for inclusive teaching and learning (Gadhvi and Parmar, 2023; Kamalov et al., 2023), promote interactive learning, which in turn leads to confidence and overall English proficiency (Vera, 2023), and "support the development of 21st-century skills" (Ayala-Pazmiño & Alvarado-Lucas, 2023, 381). The risks pointed out by Vera (2023) and other previous explorations on the topic include student privacy and potential negative effect on critical thinking skills (e.g., Marzuki et al., 2023). Moreover, a literature review done in the article by Zhai and Wibowo (2023) found that AI dialogue systems do not practice problem-solving and debate skills and do not consider cultural, empathetic and humour-related aspects. Some other disadvantages include unnatural or unwanted language, incoherent and strange sentences in writing produced by AI tools (Sumakul et al., 2022a, 55).

In general, some users of AI tools embrace innovations, while others are sceptical about them (Han, 2024). EFL teachers also may not be eager to employ AI-empowered tools, since their own attitudes and skills could be crucial factors affecting their decisions (Koltovskaia, 2023; Sumakul et al., 2022a). AI can facilitate EFL teaching and learning, but teacher professional development is necessary to achieve successful implementation (Alhalangy & AbdAlgane, 2023; Tobing et al., 2023). Moreover, some EFL teachers may be concerned that their occupation is in danger. For instance, they may fear or feel their role in the classroom could be weakened or their control could be lost (Gadhvi & Parmar, 2023; Sumakul et al., 2022b). In fact, Sumakul et al. (2022b) state that students already do not need teachers at times, since they are able to learn without human beings. Their examples of the tasks done by AI instead of teachers are related to feedback on grammar in students' writing (Sumakul et al., 2022b, 233). On the other hand, the use of AI tools cannot replace the actual classroom learning experience and the relationships built there

(Sotomayor Cantos et al., 2023). In addition, Phan (2023) claims that AI will not take over the role of EFL or other foreign language teachers and that teachers and students should find an agreement on how to use it in their classes in order to ensure interactive and student-cantered teaching and learning (Ayala-Pazmiño & Alvarado-Lucas, 2023). Furthermore, "teachers have always been able to adapt to new technologies in order to become more efficient, so it is imperative to explore *ChatGPT* [as well as other AI-based tools] as a new avenue of support that can alleviate the strain on EFL teachers" (Koraishi 2023, 56). Koraishi (2023) demonstrated how utilisation of AI-based tools aids teachers by supporting them with resources, helping to develop materials and assess, but its use with students requires teacher involvement. Local feedback provided by AWE, for instance, could be used for formative assessment to encourage and guide revisions of written pieces, but it should be accompanied by teacher feedback on the content and other global issues in students' writing in order to have quality feedback and ensure its reliability and effectiveness (Yang et al., 2023). This is important in quality education (Kamalov et al., 2023) and only teachers who are human beings can do it.

The use of AI tools may also bring the danger of overreliance on them, as noted in the study by Phan (2023) who suggests this leads to student laziness and inability to acquire and interpret language. On the other hand, "learners' technology anxiety and lack of tool variety" (Phan 2023, 45) were pointed out. Some other dangers include misuse of AI, data privacy, discrimination and bias (as AI uses public data), academic dishonesty (Sullivan et al., 2023), including plagiarism, to name but a few (Kamalov et al., 2023). The latter one (plagiarism) "has been one of the hottest topics of debate since the introduction of AI chatbots and virtual assistants, such as *ChatGPT*, *Bard*, *YouChat*, *Hubspot ChatSpot*, *Bing Chat*, or *Vicuna*" (Kamalov et al., 2023, 19-20). As a result, ethical guidelines are necessary and should be set (Koraishi, 2023; Vera, 2023). At the end of 2023, the New York Times was the first to sue OpenAI and Microsoft for copyright infringement, as they were claimed to have used the sources of the Times unethically to train their AI tools. This stirred the discussion on ethical concerns and an urgent need for guidelines and regulations even more. Quite few institutions of higher education have developed their own rules on the use of AI tools and technologies so far.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Model/Design

To address the previously indicated gap (related to the focus on EFL teachers and/ or specific AI-based tools to improve certain English skills and/ or competences) in the research, this case study aimed to investigate Lithuanian university students' perceptions and experiences of the use of AI-based technologies while studying English as a foreign language. It examined the advantages and disadvantages the students could identify and reflect on (whether AI had empowered their learning in any way or not). Prior studies on the application or integration of AI in language learning are limited in the number of their participants in terms of both teachers and students (e.g., Sumakul et al. (2022) interviewed only four Indonesian teachers while Ayala-Pazmiño and Alvarado-Lucas (2023) interviewed five in Ecuador). Thus, this study intended to include more students than these and learn about their point of view, which could change in the future with the growing variety of AI tools. At the time of the study, the students' university was still working on its institutional rules and guidelines related to the use of AI-based tools in the educational context (e.g., what could be allowed, for which purposes, etc.).

2.2. Participants/Sampling

The study recruited 28 students studying English as a foreign language at upper-intermediate level at Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) in Kaunas, Lithuania. The majority of the students were female students – 71.4% (male students accounted for 28.6%). This gender imbalance is not unusual, as the students register to classes based on the level determined by the placement test, their choice of time and

place of the class. Two randomly chosen classes of the same Englsih level were approached and invited to participate on a voluntary basis. In other words, the study used random sampling. As the students were allowed to use their smartphones in order to participate during their class time and the topic was interesting, they were excited to become involved.
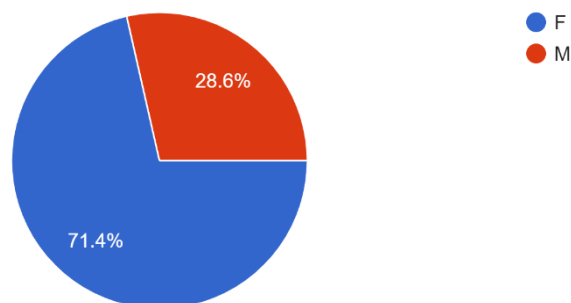
Fig. 1 Figure 1. Research participants' gender

42.9% of the study participants were 19 years old, 28.6% were 20, 21.4% were 22 or older, while the rest of the sample – 3.6% were 18 years old and the same amount was 21. Most of the students – 92.9% were freshmen, who had been accepted for studies at VMU in the fall of 2023. In other words, an average study participant was a 19-20 year-old female student in the first year of her studies.
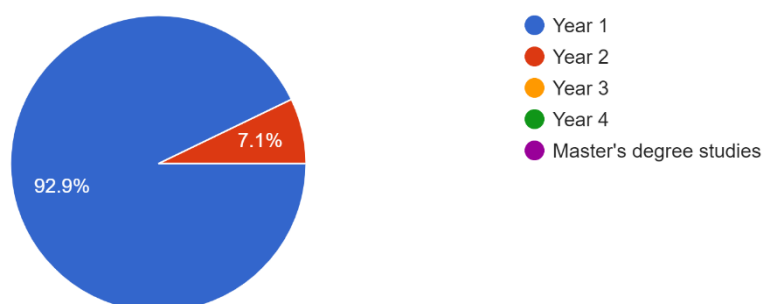
Fig. 2 Research participants' year of study

Unfortunately, no other personal information on the study participants was gathered. It would have helped to understand the profile of the participants better, but it was thought that the students may not wish to participate if too many personal questions were asked.

2.3. Instruments/Materials

Based on the literature review done, the study employed an anonymous online questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed-ended questions on the use of AI tools while studying English as a foreign language. The questionnaire was created on Google Forms for this particular study. The tool was chosen because it is liked by university students more rather than the tool of Forms on Microsoft 365, even though it is a very similar tool. In general, many university students prefer using Google rather than Microsoft services and tools that the university would like them to use. The first part of the questionnaire was dedicated to three closed-ended questions to collect information about the students' age, gender and year of study, while the second part focused on the students' views and experiences with regard to the use of AI tools in order to answer the following research question: what advantages and disadvantages can they identify and reflect

on in relation to the use of AI tools for learning English? It was hoped that fourteen closed-ended and ten open-ended questions would be sufficient to do this.

2.4. Procedure, Data Collection and Analysis

A link to the questionnaire was posted for the students on Moodle when the students were in class. Specific time was selected to approach the students, as they were studying the unit called Technology in their textbooks that week. The students were invited to participate using their cell phones or laptop computers. No time limit was given. The students' anonymity was ensured: they did not need to sign in, and no information related to their identities was collected.

Descriptive statistics (with the help of MS Excel) was used for the analysis of the responses to closed-ended questionnaire items, while thematic analysis was adopted to reveal the EFL learners' views related to the use of AI tools. It involved a systematic process during which manual data coding and categorizing was done through careful reading of the answers to identify recurring themes. The themes that emerged were related to specific questionnaire questions. Then they were interpreted in relation to the answers to other questions and the research question on advantages and disadvantages with regard to the use of AI tools for learning English.

It is important to note that the research design was mostly quantitative to achieve greater objectivity, while the qualitative data was used for support while discussing the actual student experiences. On the other hand, the difference in the number of open and closed-ended questions was not big. Therefore, it is possible to state that the questionnaire was quite balanced.

4. Results and Discussion

First of all, the participants were enquired about AI-based tools they had ever heard or known. It was an open-ended question in order not to suggest any answers, but thematic grouping, based on the salient and recurrent tools mentioned, revealed that over 71% indicated *ChatGPT*, which was on the rise of its popularity at that time, almost 25% - *Duolingo*, while some other students indicated *Google Translate*, *CoPilot*, *DeepL*, *Bing*, *Blackbox*, *Quizlet*, and *SnapChat AI* (each of the tools was mentioned only once). Thus, it is possible to state that EFL students were fairly familiar with at least one AI-based tool, while at times with more than one, as 37.5% indicated two or more of such tools.

Then the study intended to find out whether any of the above mentioned or other AI-based tools the students knew could be used for learning English. Through thematic grouping it was possible to see that over 28.5% pointed out *ChatGPT* and the same amount (28.5%) used *Duolingo*, but 25% could not name any as they had never used such tools for learning English, while others mentioned *Google Translate*, *Quizlet*, and *DeepL* (each of the tools was mentioned only once). Thus, even though many students knew about AI tools, they did not necessarily associate them to the EFL context, may not have known they could be used for learning or improving English as a foreign language, may not have known the tools they had used were based on AI or may not have remembered any.

Only after the two earlier discussed questions, the questionnaire provided a list of various AI-based tools to examine if any of the students had used them for learning English or in order to do any task for their EFL classes. The participants were able to mark as many tools as they needed to reflect on their experience. *Duolingo* was used by 42.9%, which shows that EFL students not only knew about the tool theoretically but had also tried using it to greater or lesser extent. 67.9% used *ChatGPT* for learning English, 7.1% - *Essay Writer*, 3.6% - *Google Translate*, while others – 17.9% – had not used any. In addition to the chosen

tools, the provided list included *Babbel*, *Rosetta Stone*, *Busuu*, *Memrise*, *Quillbot*, *WordTune*, and other tools, which the students seemed to be unfamiliar with.
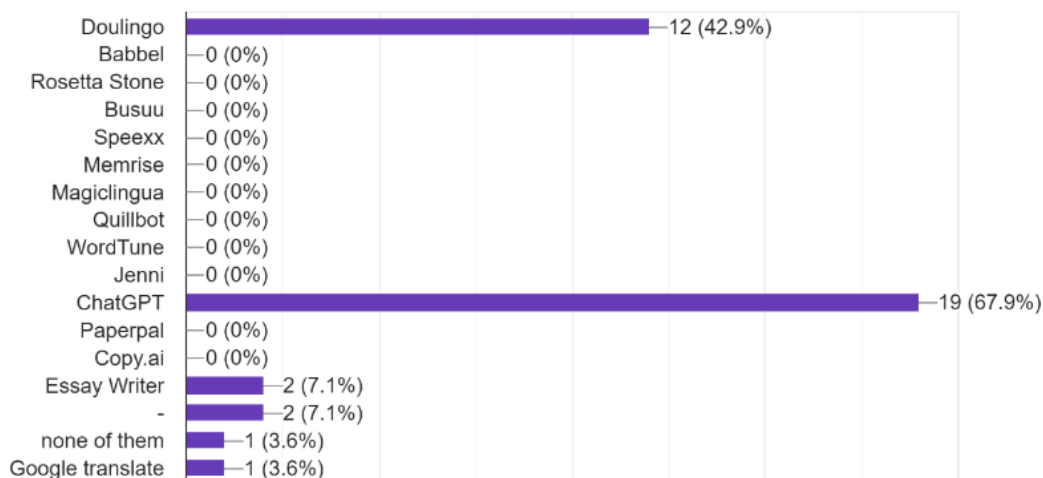
Fig. 3 Tools the students have used for learning English

It is apparent that EFL students did interact with AI tools for some language learning purposes. 53.6% of the students admitted to having used AI based-tools for suggestions, so that they could correct their mistakes themselves, while 46.4% did not use such tools for this purpose. In addition, 35.7% had used AI-based tools in order to have their mistakes corrected by them (64.3% did not use such tools for this academic purpose). 46.4% had used them to brainstorm ideas for their EFL classes (48% did not use them for this purpose). However, AI-based tools were not popular at all in paraphrasing activities, as 89.3% of the study participants had not employed them (only 10.7% had) for this.

46.4% of the students used AI-based tools to improve their English vocabulary. In contrast, 53.6% did not, as they may not have been aware it was possible or may not have found the tools useful. This is not in accord with the findings of Phan's (2023) and Sumakul et al.'s (2022a) studies where students had a very positive attitude towards the use of such tools for the improvement of English lexis. Moreover, in terms of grammar improvement, in the present study, even fewer students, 39.3% to be precise, admitted to have employed AI-tools with regard to learning English, while the rest of the sample – 60.7% – did not have such experience. Quite similar results were received in relation to the improvement of English sentence structure, as 35.7% of the respondents used while 64.3% did not use AI-based tools for this. Furthermore, reading with the help of AI tools was chosen by 14.3% as opposed by 85.7% who did not practice or improve their reading in English skills this way. This may suggest Lithuanian EFL students' reluctance to use AI tools to develop various English language skills and competences, or they lacked training on how they could do it.

It was interesting to find that none of the students in the study used AI-based tools to correct their writing in English. The same result was observed in relation to improvement or practice of listening skills. These findings are not in line with those of some previous studies in which students improved their listening (Mahmoud, 2022; Zou et al., 2023; Junaidi et al., 2020) and writing (Yang et al., 2023; Sumakul et al., 2022a; Marzuki et al., 2023) skills with the help of AI tools. On the other hand, quite often these studies provided students with some training on the use of such tools to enhance particular language skills and monitored the improvement. This study, meanwhile, did not provide any such training and thus was not experimental in nature.

Then a general question was posed to learn if students had ever used AI to get a task or tasks done instead of them. 25% provided positive answers, while others – 75% – negative ones. What is more, it was relevant to know if the students had received feedback while using AI-based tools for learning English. It seems that only 25% did receive feedback, and it was usually useful (but not always). That is, the students did not rely on AI tools as a source of feedback. Yet, it is important to point out that some studies (e.g. Daukšaitė-Kolpakovienė, 2022) show that Lithuanian EFL students prefer teacher feedback as opposed to other types of feedback. This may be the reason why the students may not have asked for feedback from AI-based tools in the first place.

In terms of students' opinions on whether the use of AI tools could help to improve their speaking in English skills, only over 32% had a negative opinion, and over 7% were not sure. Thus, 71.4% students said it was possible, even if they may not have tried this. Here are some examples from the provided explanations that reflect the positive opinion:

> *Yes, you can learn new words. (Student 4, subsequently S4)*
> *I think yes, because they are helpful when you don't understand some words, grammar rules. (S4)*

The results here resemble those in other studies (Junaidi et al., 2020; Mahmoud, 2022; Zou et al., 2023). The negative answers, however, were similar to this one: "It cannot improve, it just helps you get the answer faster" (S2). Thus, the negative responses reflected on students' scepticism with regard to utilization of AI tools for speaking.

The use of AI translation tools was not popular, as only 39% students admitted to have used them for their EFL classes in order to translate some vocabulary. As thematic analysis revealed, among the discussed tools were *ChatGPT* (mentioned twice) and *Google Translate* (mentioned 5 times).

It was also relevant to study what motivated the students or demotivated them to use AI tools. Over 57% students were highly motivated to use such tools because:
1) They save time (e.g. "faster" (S14); "it's a time saver" (S5))
2) They help to get ideas (e.g. "helps you get ideas" (S17))
3) They help to learn English vocabulary. ("motivates me to learn many synonyms" (S21))

This is in line with the results of an interesting study carried out by Abbas et al. (2024) with university students from Pakistan, which concluded that students are more likely to use *ChatGPT* when they feel time pressure or experience high academic workload. In other words, university students may turn to or be more inclined to use AI tools to save time and energy while doing work for their academic studies, which in turn may create an impression they can put less effort while completing tasks for their studies. Abbas et al. (2024) relate this behaviour to procrastination that the use of *ChatGPT*, and possibly other similar tools, can cause. In addition, AI tools as useful to get ideas to write about in the EFL context were described in the study by Sumakul et al. (2022a) as well.

The demotivating factors for almost 43% of the students were the following:
1) The information is not good/ not correct (e.g. "because AI is not always correct" (S18))
2) Students cannot learn from AI (e.g. "it seems ineffective" (S16); "I know that I won't learn from it" (S9))

Thus, the flaws of AI tools harmed students' motivation to use them for study purposes. On the other hand, as more tools are created each day and they are becoming more advanced, students' opinions towards them

may be subject to change. In fact, some studies (Mahmoud, 2022; Phan, 2023; Vera, 2023) have already showed that AI tools can increase students' motivation.

Then the respondents were asked to indicate the advantages of AI technology application in English classes or tasks that they had encountered. Through thematic analysis, the following strands could be identified:

1) It provides ideas.
2) It provides information.
3) It helps to learn vocabulary and grammar.

These advantages are similar to those noted in some previously discussed questions. In addition, over 71% students had never encountered any difficulties with AI tools, but others raised the following concerns related to their negative experience:

1) AI tools do not understand students.
2) AI is inaccurate.
3) AI does not provide correct translation.

Thus, the students evaluated the usefulness of the tools critically and did not employ them blindly. They rightly had doubts about the reliability of AI. The so-called hallucinations of *ChatGPT* and other chatbots could also be mentioned here, as some of their provided information may be completely wrong and misleading, created by the tools themselves. Not surprisingly, only over 32% indicated they felt satisfied with their experience using AI-based tools. Other students were not using any AI-based tools for learning English or found it difficult to reflect on their experience, as it was very limited.

At the end, the students were enquired about their opinion on *ChatGPT* that they seemed to be the most familiar with. It turned out that 61.5% saw it as a tool for both cheating and learning, 19.2% – a tool for cheating and the same amount perceived it as a tool for learning. Academic integrity was called into question as soon as *ChatGPT* and similar tools, especially chatbots, were introduced. These caused educational institutions of different levels to reconsider their academic integrity policies and some countries even banned the use of such tools. However, as Abbas et al. (2024) note, there is a need for a holistic approach to learning that would encourage students to find and keep the balance between their own effort and technologies. It may be that 61.5% of the students in the present study were leaning towards such a balance.

5. Conclusion

This investigation has provided some evidence on Lithuanian university students' opinions of and learning experiences with AI-based tools and was able to reveal advantages and disadvantages of such use in the EFL context. Out of all available AI-based tools, *ChatGPT* appears to be the best known one to seven out of ten EFL students. However, it does not seem that they would often use it for foreign language learning purposes, as only around three out of ten students would do it, and even fewer students use *Duolingo* for this purpose. Some individual students also know and use *Google Translate*, *Quizlet*, and *DeepL* for learning or improving English. It is important to note that the students provided such answers without being given any prompts or options to choose from. The numbers were higher when a choice of various tools was provided: *ChatGPT* was indicated as being used for learning English by seven out of ten and *Duolingo* by more than four out of ten. *Essay Writer* and *Google Translate* were rarely used. It is interesting that approximately 18% admitted to not having used any AI-based tools for English learning.

It is evident that the participants of the study used AI-based tools in order to receive suggestions about possible corrections of their produced work, but over 64% did not ask such tools to correct the mistakes, as

the students did it themselves, and most of the students never wanted such tools to do paraphrasing for them or instead of them. The majority also never asked AI tools to do any assignments instead of them. Yet, the study does not reveal whether the students have not yet learned it may be possible or they maintain high academic integrity and thus do not utilize the tools for these functionalities.

As far as various English skills and competences are concerned, more than a half of all the study participants did not try to improve their English vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure through the use of AI tools, as they may not have been aware it could be possible or may not have found the tools useful. The practice or improvement of reading skills with the help of AI tools appeared to be the least popular, as just only over one out of ten students practiced reading this way. In addition, listening and writing skills were not practiced through AI-based technologies by the participants at all. In general, the EFL students who participated in the study used AI tools for a limited number of purposes and functionalities and were rather sceptical about the use of such tools for improvement of various English skills and competences. As a result, these could be the areas for students' training, which they would greatly benefit from in the future, as they would understand that various AI tools could indeed be employed as educational resources in order to help them develop and master the discussed skills and competences. In fact, Wang and Petrina (2013) have already highlighted the usefulness of AI tools in this respect. Yet, at present, not all Lithuanian EFL students see the potential for EFL learning through AI tools.

Just over a half of all the study participants felt motivated to use AI tools for English learning in order to save time, get ideas and improve vocabulary. Thus, very practical benefits are observed, but the drawbacks were pointed out as well, as AI may not be seen as something to learn or receive information from because of numerous flaws. It is probably not surprising then that only three in ten students felt satisfied with their experience using such tools. On the other hand, over six in ten students acknowledged that *ChatGPT*, the best-known AI tool for them, could be used for both cheating and learning. As a result, this rather ambivalent point of view may have prevented them from using AI tools for academic purposes, such as learning of English, and finding a balance between technologies and their personal effort in the study process. Furthermore, guidelines for ethical use of such tools in education should be set and explained for students so that they are made aware of situations when the use is possible and acceptable and when it is not, so that their academic integrity is not put in jeopardy.

3. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The study has a few limitations that need to be addressed. One of them is a limited amount of students who participated in the study. This, in turn, is also linked to the gender imbalance. However, prior studies do not reveal the importance of gender in EFL learning strategies or differences in opinions towards the use of technologies in the EFL context.

Future studies may want to explore the (frequency of) use of particular AI tools, such as *ChatGPT* and others, in the EFL setting to develop specific language skills or achieve different learning outcomes with regards to students of different proficiency levels in English.

References

Abbas, M., Jam, F.A., & Khan, T.I. (2024). Is it harmful or helpful? Examining the causes and consequences of generative AI usage among university students. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 21*(10), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-024-00444-7

Alhalangy, A. G. I., & AbdAlgane, M. (2023). Exploring the Impact of AI on The EFL Context: A Case Study of Saudi Universities. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, *23*(2), 41–49. https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v23i2.125

Ayala-Pazmiño, M., & Alvarado-Lucas, K., (2023). Integrating Artificial Intelligence into English Language Education in Ecuador: A Pathway to Improved Learning Outcomes. *593 Digital Publisher CEIT*, *8*(3-1), pp.679-687. https://doi.org/10.33386/593dp.2023.3-1.1862

Daukšaitė-Kolpakovienė, A. (2022). Attitudes of English students whose skills are peer-assessed // Human, technologies and quality of education. Proceedings of scientific papers = Cilvēks, tehnoloģijas un izglītības kvalitāte. Ed. Linda Daniela, 360 – 368. https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2022.26

Dewi, H. K., Putri, R. E., Rahim, N. A., Wardani, T. I., & Pandin, M. G. R., Dr., M.Si., M.Phi., M.Psi., Psi. (2021). The Use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) in English Learning among University Student: Case Study in English Department, Universitas Airlangaa. *SocArXiv Papers*, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/x3qr6

Gadhvi, S, and Parmar, B. (2023). Equip English Language Learners in the Age of AI. *International Journal of Research Publication Reviews*, *4*(7), 3182-3187. https://ijrpr.com/uploads/V4ISSUE7/IJRPR15674.pdf

Han, Z. (2024). Chatgpt in and for second language acquisition: a call for systematic research. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263124000111

Han, T., & Sari, E. (2022). An investigation on the use of automated feedback in Turkish EFL students' writing classes. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 1-26. DOI: 10.1080/09588221.2022.2067179

Jiang, R. (2022). How does artificial intelligence empower EFL teaching and learning nowadays? A review on artificial intelligence in the EFL context. *Frontiers in Psychology. 13*:1049401, 1-8. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1049401

Junaidi, B. H., Julita, K., Rahman, F., & Derin, T. (2020) *Artificial Intelligence in EFL Context: Rising Students' Speaking Performance with Lyra Virtual Assistance.* International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology, *29*(5), 6735-6741. http://repository.unhas.ac.id/id/eprint/11102/

Kamalov, F., Santandreu Calonge, D., Gurrib, I. (2023). New Era of Artificial Intelligence in Education: Towards a Sustainable Multifaceted Revolution. *Sustainability 15*, 12451, 1-27. https://doi.org/10.3390/su151612451

Koltovskaia, S. (2023). Postsecondary L2 writing teachers' use and perceptions of Grammarly as a complement to their feedback. *ReCALL*, *35*(3), 290–304. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344022000179

Koraishi, O. (2023). Teaching English in the Age of AI: Embracing ChatGPT to Optimize EFL Materials and Assessment. *Language Education & Technology (LET Journal)*, *3*(1), 55-72. https://langedutech.com/letjournal/index.php/let/article/view/48/37

Mahmoud, R. H. (10 August 2022, PREPRINT) Implementing AI-based Conversational Chatbots in EFL Speaking Classes: An Evolutionary Perspective. *Research Square*, 1-21. https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-1911791/v1

Marzuki, U. W., Rusdin, D., & Indrawati, I. (2023). The impact of AI writing tools on the content and organization of students' writing: EFL teachers' perspective, *Cogent Education*, 10:2, 2236469, 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2236469

Phan, T. N. L. (2023). Students' Perceptions of the AI Technology Application in English Writing Classes. *Proceedings of the AsiaCALL International Conference*, *4*, 45–62. https://doi.org/10.54855/paic.2344

Son, J., Ružić, N. & Philpott, A. (2023). Artificial intelligence technologies and applications for language learning and teaching. *Journal of China Computer-Assisted Language Learning*, 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1515/jccall-2023-0015

Sotomayor Cantos, K. F., Varas Giler, R. C., & Castro Magayanes, I. E. (2023). Artificial Intelligence In Language Teaching And Learning. *Ciencia Latina Revista Científica Multidisciplinar*, *7*(4), 5629-5638. https://doi.org/10.37811/cl_rcm.v7i4.7368

Sullivan, M., Kelly, A., & McLaughlan, P. (2023). ChatGPT in higher education: Considerations for academic integrity and student learning. *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching*, *6*(1), 31-40. https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2023.6.1.17

Sumakul, D. T., Hamied, F. A., & Sukyadi, D. (2022a). Students' Perceptions of the Use of AI in a Writing Class. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 624, 52-57. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220201.009

Sumakul, D. T., Hamied, F. A., & Sukyadi, D. (2022b). Artificial intelligence in EFL classrooms: Friend or foe? *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network, 15*(1), 232-256. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1336138.pdf

Tobing, M. BR., Ismaliana, F. SNA, Hayrunnisa, N. R., Haswuri, N. I. T., Sutarsyah, C., & Munifatullah, F. (2023). An Exploration of Artificial Intelligence in English Language Teaching as a Foreign Language. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, *6*(1), 3837-3843. https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v6-i6-78

Vera, F. (2023). Integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the EFL Classroom: Benefits and Challenges. *Transformar*, *4*(2), 66–77. https://revistatransformar.cl/index.php/transformar/article/view/93

Wang, Y. F., & Petrina, S. (2013). Using learning analytics to understand the design of an intelligent language tutor-chatbot Lucy. *Editorial Preface*, *4*(11), 124-131. https://doi.org/10.14569/IJACSA.2013.041117

Yang, H., Gao, C. & Shen, Hz. (2023). Learner interaction with, and response to, AI-programmed automated writing evaluation feedback in EFL writing: An exploratory study. *Education and Information* Technologies, 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-11991-3

Zhai, Chunpeng, & Wibowo, Santoso. (2023). A systematic review on artificial intelligence dialogue systems for enhancing English as foreign language students' interactional competence in the university. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, *4*, 100134, 1-26. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2023.100134.

Zou, B., Du, Y., Wang, Z., Chen, J., & Zhang, W. (2023). An Investigation into Artificial Intelligence Speech Evaluation Programs With Automatic Feedback for Developing EFL Learners' Speaking Skills. *SAGE Open*, *13*(3): 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231193818

Appendix: Questionnaire on Google Forms on the use of AI-based tools for EFL learning

Gender: M/F

Age: 18/19/20/21/ 22 or older

Year of study: year 1/ year 2/ year 3/ year 4/ master's degree studies

Please name AI tools you have ever heard of/ you know.

Please name AI tools for English language learning you have ever heard of/ you know.

Please name AI tools you have ever used for English language learning/ EFL classes.

Which of these AI based (language learning) tools have you ever used for learning English or doing any

EFL tasks? Choose as many options as you need

Doulingo
Babbel
Rosetta Stone
Busuu
Speexx
Memrise
Magiclingua
Quillbot
WordTune
Jenni
ChatGPT
Paperpal
Copy.ai
Essay Writer

Do you ask AI tools for correction suggestions so that you correct your mistakes yourself? Yes/ No

Do you ask AI to correct your mistakes in English instead of you? Yes/ No

Does AI help you/ do you use it to brainstorm ideas for your EFL class assignments? Yes/ No

Do you use AI tools for paraphrasing in your EFL class? Yes/ No

Do you use AI tools to avoid plagiarism? Yes/ No

Do you use AI tools to improve your English vocabulary? Yes/ No

Do you use AI tools to improve your English grammar? Yes/ No

Do you use AI tools to improve your English sentence structure? Yes/ No

Do you use AI tools to correct your writing in English? Yes/ No

Do you use AI tools to improve or practice reading in English? Yes/ No

Do you use AI tools to improve or practice listening in English? Yes/ No

Do you ever use AI to get a task/ tasks done instead of you? Yes/ No

Have you ever received any feedback from AI tools while using them for EFL assignments? Please provide a comment below. (e.g., what sort of feedback was it? was it helpful?)

Can AI tools help to improve your English speaking skills? Please provide a comment below. (e.g., which tools? how? what is your experience?)

Do you use AI translation tools for your EFL classes. Please provide a comment below. (e.g., which tools? are the translations accurate?)

What motivates or demotivate you to use AI tools for English language learning? Please provide an answer below.

What advantages of Al technology application in English classes/ tasks/ while learning English, etc. have you encountered? Please provide an answer below.

What difficulties (if any) have you encountered when applying AI technology in English classes/ tasks/ while learning English, etc? Please provide an answer below.

To what extent are you satisfied with your experience using the AI tools while learning English? Please provide an answer below.

What do you think of ChatGPT?
It is a tool for cheating.
It is a tool for learning.
It is a tool for both cheating and learning.

You can add a comment if you wish.